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THE SCURVY.

From Lectures on the Theory and Practice of Medicine, Delivered at the London University,—By DR. ELLIOTSON.

Etymology.—THE word scurvy is said to be derived from some German words, *scharfpocke*, meaning sharp or violent pock, which were corrupted to *sharbock*; or from *shorf-pocke*, meaning scab or scurf-pock. However this may be, it is from the word *scharbock*, latinized and corrupted, that scorbutus is derived, and a very barbarous word it is. From this we are said to have our English term *scurvy*; but I should rather think it came directly from the Danish word *scurv*; and this name scurvy is used by the vulgar in a very indefinite sense, being applied by them to any ill-looking chronic cutaneous disease, but in our profession it is restricted to a particular affection.

Symptoms.—This disease is characterized by a bloated surface, and petechiæ, vibices, and ecchymoses. By petechiæ are meant minute dark red or livid points, little larger than the point of a pin; spots still larger than these are called vibices; and when instead of spots we have patches, the word ecchymosis is employed. They all relate to the same appearance, but denote a difference in extent. With respect to color, these points, specks or patches, are of a dark red or purple hue, but may contain all the shades which we see in bruises. The surface, therefore, in this disease is bloated, and upon it are seen points, specks, and patches, of a red or purple color, and of all the shades which we see in common bruises. A very remarkable circumstance, however, also attends the disease, and that is, the hardness of many parts, but particularly of the thighs. If you examine the thigh of an individual laboring under scurvy, though it be only in the slightest degree, I believe you will find it generally, but more especially under the hams, hard; and in severe cases I have seen it as hard as a board. I have not seen many cases of the disease, but in all of them I have noticed this circumstance. The gums are particularly affected; they are spongy and bleed, and either they or the breath, or both, send forth a very offensive smell. Such is the disease of the gums that the teeth very frequently fall out, and in addition to their being spongy and bleeding, they become enlarged and livid.

This is a disease of great debility, and the spirits are always very much

depressed. So great is the debility, that people very frequently faint from time to time, and the pulse is found to be weak, and the surface of the body cold. Very often, ulcers form upon the surface, and discharge a thin and foetid bloody fluid, and at last a coagulum of blood is formed. The gums are in precisely the same predicament. The blood which is discharged and coagulates upon the ulcer is with great difficulty separated from it; it adheres to the ulcer and the flesh which is beneath, and, when you remove such a coagulum, the flesh is found to be, like the gums, soft and spongy. If you remove the coagulum, it is instantly renewed; a fresh oozing of blood takes place, a second coagulum supplies the place of the first, and at length a fungus will sprout forth—a soft, flaccid, dark-looking fungus, which sprouts as fast as you take it away, and which is called by sailors *bullock's liver*; it may attain an enormous size. If this fungus be repressed, a gangrenous tendency is frequently observed; the leg will swell, and become more spotted and painful. You of course know that when a fungus sprouts forth from the dura mater after a fracture of the skull, it is very dangerous to repress it; if the part be compressed, very frequently dangerous symptoms ensue. So it is found injurious in scurvy to repress this *bullock's liver*, because the pressure induces a gangrenous tendency. The very slightest bruise inflicted upon a patient laboring under scurvy to any degree, will generally produce an ulcer of this description.

There are, however, some very remarkable circumstances respecting this disease. Old wounds, and even fractures, have a tendency to recur under it. Wherever an ulcer has existed, wherever a solution of continuity in soft parts has taken place previously, although the parts have been well cicatrized, yet under this disease the wound often opens again. Nor is this occurrence confined to soft parts, but even bones themselves, as I just now stated, which were formerly fractured and repaired, become again disunited, showing that the callus of bones is not so strong as the original parts of the body, and that it suffers when the rest of the bones do not.

There is also another very singular circumstance connected with this disease, and that is the occurrence of nyctalopia, or night blindness. Patients laboring under scurvy frequently become blind, either altogether or in part, when night comes on.

Causes.—Now the great causes of this disease appear to be the want of fresh animal and fresh vegetable food. It is on this account that formerly the disease was very common at sea, for at one period sailors were supplied with nothing but salt provision. So badly were ships formerly provided for, and so bad was the general management, that in the year 1726, when Admiral Hozier sailed to the West Indies with seven ships, he buried his ship's company twice, and then died himself of a broken heart. Deaths to the amount of eight or ten a-day took place formerly in a moderate ship's company. The bodies were sown up in hammocks and washed about the deck for want of sufficient strength on the part of survivors to throw them overboard. I may mention that Lord Anson, in the year 1741, lost one half of his crew by scurvy in six months: 961 men sailed with him, only 335 of whom were alive at the end of the year; and at the end of the second year, 71 only were fit

for the least duty—not to say duty, but for the *least* duty. Sir Gilbert Blane says that the disease appears in about six or seven weeks from the beginning of sea-victualing.

You cannot have a better description of the dreadful mismanagement formerly, in regard to the navy, than you will find in Roderic Random. Smollett, both in that and in his *History of England*, gives an account of the armament which, about the same time that Lord Anson's expedition took place, was sent out against Carthagera. The description is from his own observation. He says the provisions consisted of *putrid salt beef*, to which the sailors gave the name of *Irish horse*, (I suppose the contractors lived in Ireland, and it looked like horse-flesh,) *salt pork and musty bread*. The salt pork came from New England, and was neither fish nor flesh, but savored of both. The bread came from the same country, and the biscuit, like a piece of clock-work, moved by its own internal impulse, occasioned by myriads of insects that dwelt within it. The butter was served out by the gill, and was exactly like train-oil thickened with salt; and though there was water enough to allow each man half-a-gallon daily for six months, yet each had only a purser's quart a-day in the torrid zone, where a gallon would have been hardly enough to repair the waste of perspiration. You cannot wonder, therefore, that scurvy formerly prevailed to this dreadful amount.

Former prevalence in London.—However, the disease prevailed likewise on shore, and scurvy at one period was one of the most fatal diseases in London, so that even in the 17th century—as late as that—there were from 50 to 90 deaths from it annually, and in the year of the plague there were not fewer than 105 deaths. These frightful occurrences took place regularly, and not during a particular year. The same reason, however, existed for the prevalence of scurvy in London which produced it at sea; for the food of the Londoners was then salt beef and pork, with a little veal. The lower orders had very little else in the time of Henry VIII. The fact was, that pasture land only was then common, and very little was cultivated. Animals could feed, of course, only during the summer and autumn; hay being a later improvement, it was impossible to feed them longer than that period, and they were therefore killed as the winter came on, and salted, and thus a store of provisions was laid up until the next spring. Garden stuff, too, was extremely scarce in those days, so that Catherine of Arragon, one of the numerous wives of Henry VIII. was actually obliged, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, to send to the Netherlands for a gardener to raise her a salad, so ignorant were the gardeners of this country of what is now considered within the reach of everybody. Cabbages and other garden stuff were not cultivated in England before the reign of Henry VIII. Government, too, at that period, seemed to encourage the consumption of this meat; for the price of meat was fixed by law at one-twentieth of what it now is, whereas wheat was fixed at only one-tenth of its present price. Care was thus taken to have a good supply of animal food, but vegetable food was comparatively neglected. I may mention that in 1700 a cabbage cost three-pence, which in 1760 cost only one halfpenny; such was the advance of art and the increase of knowledge, that so great a difference occurred in the price of a cabbage at those two periods. Other greens, too, at

first, were proportionately dear ; and garden stuff was only used at that time on Sundays, and as a great dainty, when people had company.

The use of salt or putrid meat appeared to be the cause of scurvy. But it was not the salt ; for salt, though taken in the greatest excess, will not occasion scurvy, and scurvy will take place where no salt is used—nay, persons will have scurvy who eat no meat at all ; and therefore it is not this, but the want of other food—the want of fresh animal and fresh vegetable food—which induces the disease. I have seen several, not a large number, but several cases of scurvy, in individuals who had eaten no meat at all ; they had been deprived of meat of every description, and it arose in them from the want of food. You will find in the *Transactions of the College of Physicians*, vol. ii. two cases mentioned by Sir Francis Milman, of women that had the scurvy in the country, but who had eaten no meat whatever, having lived on tea and bread after being accustomed to better food.

Sea and land scurvy, I believe, are exactly the same ; and I may state, that Mr. Musgrave, who published a work on the Gout in 1703, mentions that this disease was common in Somersetshire ; so that you observe it prevailed at sea, in large towns, and in the country.

There can be no doubt that many circumstances conspire to the occurrence of this disease. Cold and the want of exercise unquestionably encourage it ; for sailors are observed to suffer in cold latitudes, when they are placed under the same circumstances, with the exception of latitude, in which they escape it in warm climates : this fact strikingly illustrates the effect of cold. Then, as to the want of exercise, Captain Cook says that the people in Kamschatka, who are habituated to hard labor, never have the scurvy, while the Russian and Cossack in garrison, who live in the greatest indolence, are subject to it. Sir Gilbert Blane says that the prime seamen only were attacked with scurvy, who were exempted from pumping. He instances the case of a particular ship's crew, and says, that once the prime seamen suffered the disease, whereas those who were obliged to work hard at the pump from time to time, the ship having proved leaky, escaped. Moisture also is said to have a considerable effect—I presume, especially when united with cold. La Prouse attributes the prevention of scurvy in his crew very much to the vessel being kept dry by fumigation, and braziers of hot coals. Captain Parry ascribes the first case of scurvy, in one of his expeditions, to moisture. It was observed, when scurvy prevailed in London a few years ago, at the Penitentiary at Milbank, that those persons employed in the kitchen always escaped ; perhaps, however, they got better food than the rest, or more of it, but at any rate they had a warmer place. Captain King told Dr. Macmichael, as he stated in a paper read last year at the College of Physicians, that, in a voyage round the south coast of America, no case of scurvy was apparent, the crew having had plenty of lemon juice, although there was a remarkably cold and moist state of the atmosphere. I do not believe that moisture will occasion it alone, but moisture certainly aggravates the effects of cold in this disease, as it does in all others.

The difference between ships' crews now and formerly is very striking. While the crew of Lord Anson suffered so much in a voyage round the

world, that of Captain Cook, in a voyage subsequently performed, suffered nothing. The difference arose from this circumstance : Captain Cook had a good supply of portable soup, sour crout, and fresh meat, and he kept his men in regular exercise, at the same time taking care that extreme cleanliness and ventilation should be observed. In addition to this they were only out about three weeks on their longest cruise, although absent so long.

Such measures as these will generally prevent scurvy, if there be no fresh provision on board, provided there is a supply of lemon juice ; and sometimes, in spite of the neglect of all these particulars, lemon juice alone will prevent it.

Treatment.—The great remedy, however, for scurvy is fresh food, animal and vegetable ; farinaceous vegetable substances are insufficient ; and when that cannot be procured, then I believe lemon juice will be found the most efficacious medicine. The effects of lemon juice on the disease are speedy and wonderful ; so wonderful are they, that the compiler of Lord Anson's voyage says, after describing the disease, and the horrors which took place from its ravages, that the cure of such a complaint seems impossible by any remedy, or any management, that can be employed. Scurvy was formerly set down, without hesitation, as an incurable disease—not only as a disease incurable *then*, but as being so formidable in its nature that it *never* would be cured ; and yet in almost every case we can now cure it with the utmost facility. It is not only lemon juice that will cure it, but all the hesperidei—the lime, Seville and unripe China oranges. Malt and sour crout are thought to have a similar property. The custom, I believe, is to give three tablespoonfuls every morning to each man, for the purpose of keeping the disease away. Lemon juice is preserved by mixing one-tenth of spirit with it. One ounce of lemon juice, with one ounce and a half of sugar, is the present navy allowance ; and it is said that scurvy rarely occurs now in the longest voyage. Citric acid is thought to be inferior to lemon juice. During the nine years previous to this supply, the average number of sick sent to the hospitals was one man in three and nine-tenths of the whole navy ; and in the succeeding nine years it was only one in eight and four-tenths. The juice is also said to improve the general health. I may mention, as a good illustration of the power of lemon juice, that the Suffolk left England in April 1794, and had no communication with land for twenty weeks and a day, and yet all the time she had only fifteen sick, and those slightly, and soon cured by an augmentation of the first allowance of two-thirds of an ounce ; and at her arrival not one had the scurvy. In 1800, the channel fleet, consisting of 24 ships of the line, besides smaller vessels, had no fresh provisions for 16 weeks, but plenty of lemon juice, and not a single instance of scurvy occurred ; whereas in 1780, the channel fleet could not keep sea beyond ten weeks, and was worn out with scurvy and fever ; and 2500 men were sent into port with the scurvy. We read in Purchas's Pilgrim, that Commodore Lancashire sailed from England with three other ships, for the Cape of Good Hope, on the 2d of April, and arrived at Saldanha Bay on the 1st of August, the Commodore's own ship being in perfect health, from the administration of three tablespoonfuls of lemon juice every morning to each of his men ; whereas

the other ships were so sickly as to be unmanageable for want of hands, and the Commodore was obliged to send men on board, to take in their sails and hoist out their boats.

This disease, of course, occurred in ancient times. It was known in the Roman army, in Germany, and also in the impiously denominated "Holy Wars;" but it was first particularly noticed in the crew of Vasco di Gama in 1497. You will find it mentioned by Pliny, as occurring in the Roman army under the command of Germanicus. But with respect to the remedy, its discovery appears to have been left for modern times, but still not recent times, as you will find it mentioned as far back as 200 years ago. There is a curious fact connected with it, and one which is very instructive, as teaching us not to despise anything without good reason. It is said that when the London College of Physicians was applied to by Government, for a cure for scurvy, they advised vinegar, which has very little power in the affection; and that a Fellow of the College, who wrote on the disease in 1753, never adverts to lemon juice at all in his Treatise, and yet that, two hundred years ago, it was mentioned in Woodall's "Surgeon Mate, or Military and Domestic Medicine,"—a work published in 1636, "by John Woodall, Master in Surgery;" and he ends his praise of it by saying that he dare not write how good a sauce it was with meat, lest the chief in the cabin should waste it to save vinegar. It is said even to have been mentioned still earlier, in Purchas's Pilgrim, published in 1600. Dr. Lind, of Haslar Hospital, revived the knowledge of it, more than one hundred years afterwards. He stated its peculiar powers, in the third edition of his work on the Diseases of Seamen, in 1772, but even then it was not brought generally into use, and the navy actually suffered most frightfully from scurvy till 1795. Although the remedy was mentioned two hundred years ago, in one book, and again in a well-known surgical work in 1636, yet the navy suffered till 1795, when a good supply of it was ordered by government, when Earl Spencer, the father of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, was at the head of the Admiralty, on the representations of Dr. Blair and Sir Gilbert Blane, who were commissioners of the board of sick and wounded seamen. In less than eighteen months there was not a case of scurvy in Haslar Hospital. In 1780, there had not been fewer than 1457; in 1806, there was but 1; and in 1807, but 1.

So great is the effect of this article, that you will find the following passage in Sir W. Herschel's work, published in Dr. Lardner's Cyclopædia, on the cultivation of the physical sciences. He says, "At present the scurvy is almost completely eradicated in the navy; partly, no doubt, from an increased and increasing attention to general cleanliness, comfort, and diet, but mainly from the constant use of a simple and palatable beverage—the acid of lemon, served out in daily rations. If (he adds) the gratitude of mankind be allowed on all hands to be the just meed of the philosophic physician, to whose discernment in seizing, and perseverance in forcing it on public notice, we owe the great safeguard of infantile life, it ought not to be denied to those whose skill and discrimination have thus strengthened the sinews of our most powerful arm, and obliterated one of the darkest features in one of the most glorious of all professions."

The scurvy is now prevented by great attention to cleanliness—by

giving sailors as wholesome food as possible—by attention to exercise and cheerfulness, and by a regular supply of lemon juice. In spite of all this, however, sporadic cases still occur ; but, in general, that is all. I have had myself several cases of this disease in London, and some of them were in persons who had never been at sea, who had eaten no salt meat, but had been deprived of food nearly altogether. Others were sailors, who came on shore laboring under the disease ; for in merchantmen there is continually the greatest neglect. I had one patient, a few months ago, who had been sixteen weeks at sea without any medical man on board (that, I suppose, is unavoidable in small ships) ; who had had nothing but the hardest salt beef, without a particle of anything else except biscuit, during the whole voyage. He was, as might be expected, laboring under scurvy to a great extent ; and he said that several of the crew had died. I am not sure that the lemon juice, which I gave these patients as a matter of course, did them any good, because they were allowed fresh meat and greens every day, with porter, every article of good diet, and this was quite sufficient, I am sure, to cure the disease. I gave them lemon juice in addition, because we have such authority for its employment. However, some persons now begin to say that the lemon juice does no good—that the benefit entirely arises from the other means that are employed, and that the neutral salts, particularly nitre, answer a better purpose. I dare not say, however, that authority so accumulated and so immense as it is, respecting the powers of lemon juice, is at all to be disputed. I certainly cannot but think, till we have further facts, that it is our duty in every case to supply lemon juice, or similar things if it cannot be obtained, in the hope of doing away with the ill effects which the want of fresh food occasions.

I may mention, also, that, in regard to local applications, it is found that lemon juice is one of the best when there is a scorbutic ulcer. I believe a slice of lemon laid upon it is one of the best applications that can be employed, as Pierre Lebat is said to mention, in his Voyage to the Antilles.

Now this is a disease which I should say is a chemical disease, if any one be so. In one sense the constitution is not at all in fault ; all the fluids and all the solids appear to be changed, but you have only to give a different chemical state to the body, and the disease is cured. You need give nothing which acts by a specific operation—no drug, I mean, which acts as a medicine—but employ fresh articles of diet, and you remedy the depraved constitution of the whole mass of solids and fluids. I have, therefore, mentioned this disease before I came to any of those which are clearly seated in particular parts. I am not aware that this attacks any one part in particular ; it seems to be a cachectic state of the whole frame ; and if any disease be an instance of universal disease, I should certainly say it was scurvy.

There is an affection very similar to scurvy in some respects, which has been arranged and described by Willan, among cutaneous diseases, and which is called *purpura*. Some are of opinion that this is the same as scurvy ; but I cannot think so, for reasons which I will state when speaking of diseases of the skin.

HEREDITARY HÆMORRHAGIC TENDENCY.

A Case of Hereditary Hæmorrhagic Tendency.—By JAMES N. HUGHES, M. D. of Simpsonville, Kentucky.

IN the IV. Vol. of this Journal,* page 518, I gave an account of a case of Hereditary Hæmorrhagic Tendency, ascertained to be universal among the male members of the family in which it exists; the females being, at the same time, as universally exempt from it. Since the publication of this case I have met with one of the same character, in another and entirely different family, a succinct history of which I propose now to give, simply for the purpose of calling the attention of the profession more particularly to this singular disease, for such it should undoubtedly be considered.

On visiting the house of a respectable farmer of this neighborhood, my attention was directed to the case of a youth ten or twelve years old, which appeared to be rheumatic, and which was so pronounced. The correctness of my opinion was called in question by an old lady present, who was herself a member of the family, and intimately acquainted with the history of the case. On further inquiry I ascertained it to be one of hereditary origin, the rheumatism being only the sequel of another affection to which the boy had been subject from infancy, viz. hæmorrhage. Learning that this disease was common in every branch of the N. family, of which that of my friend Mr. P. was one, I inquired particularly concerning it, when the following facts were communicated:

1st. That spitting, vomiting and purging of blood; bloody urine; bleeding at the nose; extravasations of blood among the muscles and integuments of the body generally, especially of the extremities, producing dark discolorations and swelling, attended frequently, after a few days' continuance, with obtuse pain and stiffness, and copious and obstinate hæmorrhage from very inconsiderable incisions, on whatever part of the body they are made, have been exceedingly common among the male members of the connection.

2d. That the hæmorrhage, whenever it has manifested itself, has been invariably attended with rheumatisms to a greater or less extent.

3d. That the slightest sprains or contusions have generally been followed by rheumatism of the part.

4th. That the majority of the males, who have arrived at old age, have been much disabled by rheumatism.

5th. That on the approach of old age, the tendency to hæmorrhage has been less manifest.

6th. That a considerable number of the males have died in infancy and childhood.

7th. That deaths immediately from the loss of blood have been frequent; several resulting from the employment of the lancet, some from accidental wounds, others from various internal hæmorrhages, and two of the number simply from the application of blisters,—“*the blisters*,” in the language of my informant, “*drawing blood instead of water.*”

* The Transylvania Journal of Medicine, from which we extract this interesting history.—Ed.

8th. That, of the two diseases, hæmorrhage and rheumatism, the former has always maintained the priority.

9th. That the females, though in no instance sufferers from this predisposition, have, nevertheless, invariably transmitted it to their offspring.

And 10th. That the predisposition in question can be satisfactorily traced as far back as the fourth and fifth generation.

We present the above as facts, upon the authority of several intelligent and highly reputable members of the family to which they relate ; a personal acquaintance with whom, enables us to repose the utmost confidence in their communications.

By comparing this case with that previously published, they will be seen to exhibit a striking parallel in every important particular. In both, the tendency to hæmorrhage seems to depend mainly, if not entirely, upon a morbid condition of the capillary system ; there being in neither, with the exception noticed in the account given of the first case, any morbid manifestations on the part of the larger blood vessels. The cause of this remarkable diathesis is, to us, shrouded in darkness ; and it will perhaps appear hereafter, that post mortem examinations alone are capable of revealing its true character. When it was first presented to us, we regarded it as one of those rare anomalies in physiology, occasionally met with by physicians. But since our limited opportunities for observation have brought under our notice two distinctly marked cases, we are induced to suspect that it is not so unfrequent an occurrence as it was at first supposed to be ; and although it has not yet been thoroughly investigated, it has not entirely escaped the attention of those who have been extensively engaged in the practice of medicine. If, as suggested, the affection spoken of be not so uncommon as was supposed on first consideration, it is a question meriting much attention, whether it is susceptible of mitigation or relief ? It is true that most hereditary maladies have proved extremely difficult of management. But on the other hand, it is not less true that even here the efforts of the profession have contributed materially to mitigate the sufferings of afflicted humanity.

ERUPTIVE DISEASE FROM THE USE OF CUBEBS.

Cases of an Eruptive Disease arising from the Use of Cubebs. By
JOHN NORTH, F.L.S.

THE reputation of a medical practitioner in the estimation of the public as frequently depends upon the knowledge he possesses of trifling facts that are connected with his profession, as upon his intimate acquaintance with the nature and treatment of the most formidable maladies. A circumstance recently fell under my observation which illustrates the truth of this assertion : Two footmen, in a family of distinction, were suddenly attacked with a severe eruptive disease, resembling Urticaria, but differing in some respects from that complaint. The symptoms of general disturbance ran rather high, and the family became alarmed : their usual medical attendant was consulted, and, with more sincerity than judgment, he confessed that "he could not possibly conceive what the disease was, or from what cause it had arisen." Another practitioner happened to be

in attendance upon one of the members of the family, and his attention was attracted by the appearance of the men servants: he had several times seen such an eruptive disease produced by the use of cubebs, and, upon being informed that a mystery hung over the nature and cause of the complaint, he at once suggested that cubebs had been taken, and that the local and general symptoms would soon disappear. The fact was precisely as he supposed. The men had gonorrhœa; had dosed themselves freely with cubebs, and from the use of this medicine the eruptive disease had arisen. They were placed under the care of the surgeon who had shown a knowledge of the nature of their complaint, and under the use of mild aperients, with a few days' confinement to the house, they were entirely relieved. The confidence of the family in their former medical attendant was destroyed, and the second practitioner has subsequently retained their friendship.

This anecdote is mentioned as an apology for relating the following cases, which happened in my own practice. I am aware that to many surgeons the fact is known, that cubebs, and *sometimes* the balsam of copaiva, produces the same effects I am about to describe; but students and junior practitioners may long remain ignorant of such occasional effects of these medicines, as I find, upon reference to works which are generally consulted, that no mention is made of them.

Captain P—, after trying various remedies for the cure of an obstinate yet trifling gleet, took, of his own accord, large doses of cubebs three times a day. On the fourth day from the commencement of the remedy, he complained of great restlessness, flushing of the face, sickness and headache. On the fifth, he was covered with an eruption from head to foot, which was accompanied by a high degree of sympathetic fever. The peculiar appearances of the eruption I will attempt to describe in the next case, which was more severe, and attended by more strongly marked characters. Captain P— recovered in a few days, by the assistance of mild aperients, salines, and confinement to the house: he was, of course, desired to discontinue the cubebs. Upon a subsequent occasion, he again ventured to try the remedy, but he gave it up after taking one dose of it, in consequence of feeling the same general symptoms of restlessness, &c. which had preceded the former attack.

Madame T— had long labored under severe leucorrhœa, and, from motives of delicacy, had neglected to consult any medical practitioner. She was recommended, by a friend, to try the effects of powder of cubebs, in doses of a small teaspoonful twice a day. After the first two doses she felt feverish, with a tingling and heat over the whole surface of the body; she had rather severe headache, and a very disagreeable sensation of fulness in the eyes; the hands and feet felt hot and numbed. On the third day, a "flush of red" broke over the whole of the body; and on the fourth, a decided eruption appeared. The cubebs was now discontinued, six doses having been taken. On the fifth day my attendance was required: her appearance was now peculiar, and rather formidable: her features were so completely changed as to leave no trace of their natural expression; the face was excessively swollen; eyes turgid and watery; lips puffed, dry, and shining; coryza; hands much swollen, and so stiff that the fingers could not be bent; respiration hurried and difficult;

pulse small, and varying from 120 to 130 ; skin burning hot ; intense thirst ; tongue very white ; constant nausea, and occasional vomiting. She was covered with an eruption from head to foot, which in some parts could not have been distinguished from *Urticaria febrilis*, while in others it had more the appearance of Lichen in its papular stage, but with much more intense inflammation around the base of the papulæ than is commonly seen in that disease. A fortnight elapsed before this lady completely recovered. The remedies employed consisted of purgatives, salines, and mild anodynes at bedtime.

Two or three other cases of the same kind, but milder in degree, have fallen under my own care, and several have been mentioned to me by other practitioners.

The following case was published in the *Archives Générales* for Nov. 1831. A young man was admitted into La Pitié, under M. Velpeau, with gonorrhœa, which had existed for two months. After a few days, he was ordered a mixture containing cubebs, copaiva, and magnesia, in the proportions of two drachms of copaiva to four of cubebs. He took this mixture daily, and on the sixth day he was attacked with violent itching and burning over the head and neck. In the morning, his face was covered with dark-red patches, and in the course of a few hours this appearance of the skin, as well as the itching and sensation of burning, had extended over the chest and arms. The following day, the abdomen was attacked in the same manner. On the third day, the efflorescence that had at first appeared became pale, but the legs and feet now presented a similar appearance. The case might easily have been taken for measles, if the cutaneous symptoms only had been regarded, but there was none of the characteristic constitutional disturbance that attends that disease : the general health was, in fact, undisturbed. In the course of a few days the eruption entirely disappeared ; and if any doubt had existed as to its cause, it was completely removed by the following circumstance : about three weeks after his recovery, the patient repeated a dose of the medicine, which he had accidentally kept ; the eruption appeared on the following morning, and remained for two or three days.

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THE SIGNS OF DEATH.

It is among those merciful provisions by which our passage to that bourne whence no traveller returns is rendered less gloomy and terrific, that the approach of death rarely makes itself known to the dying man for any considerable period before its arrival. A man affected with chronic disease, as phthisis, for instance, will have occasional misgivings as to its eventual termination, and will find himself forced to admit a consciousness of wasted vigor and a failing frame. But besides that this is occasional

only, and that the general train of feeling in these cases inclines more to hope than to apprehension, this general doubt as to the termination of one's disease is very different from a distinct presentiment of the approach of death ; and we are disposed to think that the latter seldom occurs until within a few hours of the event itself. Sometimes too this presentiment is deceptive, and a patient may feel quite sure that he is going to die, when in fact he is not in danger. It is, on these and many other accounts, extremely desirable for the practitioner to be fully acquainted with the symptoms of approaching death, and to be able to warn the friends, and if necessary the patient himself, in such decisive terms, that the event when it does arrive may never be unexpected. This however is not always found an easy task. Death will now and then continue to elude the sagacity of the Doctor as well as his patient ; and there are few practitioners but can recal instances of patients whom they had left without anticipating any immediate danger, but who have dropped away within a few hours. To guard practitioners as far as possible from these occurrences, which are both painful and mortifying, many authors have attempted to assign the symptoms of death, and to lay down rules by which an attentive observer may detect its approach, at a considerable interval of time. The ancients, particularly attentive to every circumstance connected with diagnosis, did not overlook this topic ; and we know of no author who can be consulted with more advantage on the subject under consideration than the venerable Celsus. In the few remarks which we shall make at this time, we shall avail ourselves of his instructions ; and if occasion offers shall refer to his authority.

Among the circumstances to be regarded in discerning the approach of death, are the state of the pulse, the countenance, respiration, muscular motion, the surface, the mind, and the senses. As respects the pulse, the criterion which it affords is highly important and useful, provided its indications be carefully noted ; but where no other circumstance has led the physician to suspect the approach of danger, this may, from that very circumstance, happen to be overlooked. The change which takes place in the pulse is however less marked than that which happens to some other of the functions. It may suddenly lose its regularity and become intermittent ; or it may simply become very rapid, feeble and fluttering ; and in either case it will require a nice tact to distinguish by this means the approach of death from a state of extreme debility unattended with immediate danger. The act of dying is accompanied by a peculiar state of the pulse, which a little practice renders it easy to recognize.

The change of the countenance is one of the most striking indications of death, and that one which is most frequently noticed by friends. When this observation has been made by others, however, it is but small merit in the practitioner to confirm it. If on the contrary he is the first to observe the change, the circumstance may do some credit to his skill and

sagacity. The general effect of the changes which take place in the countenance, can be better observed than described ; but some of the particular changes which go to produce it may well be noticed. Celsus mentions among these the sharpness of the nose and the collapse of the temples, together producing what we term distortion of the countenance ; the tenseness of the skin of the forehead, the dark or pallid hue of the face. The eyes become dim and glassy, the red vessels on their surface lose their blood, and the mucus secreted by the conjunctival surface adheres to the minor angles. Sleeping with partially closed eyelids, though common to this state, with others, and therefore not diagnostic, also deserves mention, as likewise an unusual whiteness of the lids, extending to the lips and nose.

The muscular strength affords another important criterion for determining the approach of death ; and the careful observation of this comes very clearly within the province of the medical man. The failure of muscular strength is principally obvious in a want of control over the sphincter muscles, so that the feces pass away involuntarily, and in the failure of the power to support the body, which therefore slides gradually toward the extremity of the bed. This effect however is not entirely accounted for on the simple supposition of a failure of muscular power, since a corpse placed in the same manner would retain its place. It is certain, as a general fact, that when great debility is present, the flexor counteract the extensor muscles, so that the limbs are flexed upon the trunk and the head thrown forward upon the trunk ; and in some of the positions produced by this preponderance, gravity no doubt will act to carry the body in the direction mentioned. Among other evidences of the failure of muscular power, may be mentioned the spasmodic action of the muscles, producing what is commonly called *subsultus tendinum*. The failure of deglutition, which, however, generally occurs at a later period, is only another instance of the same general fact.

With respect to the respiration, few remarks can be made which will be equally applicable to the fatal termination of all varieties of disease. The most remarkable affection of the respiratory organs is hiccup, which is among the most familiar and obvious prognostics. The mucous crepitus within the windpipe, so familiarly known as rattles, is one of the most certain indications of death ; but in croup and similar affections, it is possible for the character of the respiration to change to this, without the difference in sound being sufficient to strike the observer without considerable attention ; and this may prove in practice a diagnosis of some importance.

The state of the cutaneous surface affords one of the best indications of the approach of death, because one least likely to be simulated by a different state of things. An icy coldness of the extremities, proceeding towards the trunk, is one of the surest signs of dissolution, and one which a diligent observer will not easily mistake. If, however, the attention is not habitually directed to the state of the surface, it may happen that even

this circumstance may be disregarded and overlooked. A cold sweat, though not peculiar to the state in which death is approaching, is sometimes a symptom of this state. The paleness of the general surface, apart from that of the countenance already noticed, will sometimes also attract the attention.

Among the modes in which the mind and senses are affected by the approach of death, may be mentioned delirium, which generally, though not always, is the precursor of dissolution. This is made manifest by incoherent expressions, by picking at the bedcloths, grinding the teeth, muttering, &c. The senses of sight and hearing are frequently impaired, and sometimes wholly lost, for some time before death.

Among other signs of death, not precisely falling under the foregoing heads, may be mentioned jactitation, which forms in children one of the best diagnostics; obstinate diarrhœa with very fœtid discharges, which occur in particular descriptions of cases; the sudden drying up of an habitual discharge from any external inflamed surface, and the disappearance of pain without the removal of its cause.

We shall conclude this imperfect sketch of the signs of approaching death, in the words of the illustrious author we have so often quoted; language which though somewhat humbling to the pride of science, must be confessed to be as applicable to the present state of the medical art as to that of the period at which it was written.

I am aware that the question may be asked me—if there are certain signs of approaching death, how happens it that patients deserted by their physicians sometimes recover, and that instances have occurred of those who revived even in their way to the grave. In fact, the illustrious Democritus was so persuaded of the difficulty of determining these points, that he would neither assign the symptoms of approaching death, nor the signs of its having actually occurred. To such remarks, I will not answer, that these ambiguous marks deceive only the unskillful; that the sagacious Asclepiades meeting a funeral, discovered that the apparent corpse was still living; and that the errors referred to belong not to the art, but its professors. I will take a more modest ground; confessing that the medical art is conjectural; and that from the nature of conjecture, what proves true generally, must sometimes fail. If, then, a symptom deceives us in one case of a thousand, while it holds good in the rest, this need not destroy our confidence. This uncertainty is by no means confined to the particular diagnosis in question, but extends to every branch of the healing art. Sometimes our expectation deceives us, and a patient dies of whose safety we felt entirely secure; and sometimes the remedy administered aggravates the disease. Nor can human skill, in so great a variety of cases, hope always to decide rightly; but we must confide in that treatment which is found successful in the majority of cases; and the signs which determine our prognosis, if fallacious in themselves, should only be the more diligently and carefully studied.

FRENCH MEDICAL JOURNAL.

It were too arduous a task to enumerate all the circumstances of a local, physical, moral, and political character, which render the city of Paris the richest field in Europe, if not in the world, for medical and surgical observation. Most of the productions of this field, that reach this country, come in a mask impenetrable to the majority of the profession, and we have long thought it desirable that some means should be adopted, not only to remove this mask, but also to furnish the American faculty with a more abundant supply. The Hospitals of Paris present cases of almost every description, and many that are interesting and instructive, and calculated to enlighten the dark parts of medical science. The many societies there existing, and the spirit with which this science is cultivated, not only in them, but also by their able members, in their individual capacity, all lead to the belief that an American Edition of the Journal published under the direction of Beclard, Cloquet, Dupuytren, Laennec, Orfila, Richerand, and other worthy associates of such men, must be full of important intelligence to the practitioner. Such a translation is proposed by Dr. Lindsley, of Washington, and we trust his subscription will be such as to enable him to carry his projected plan into execution.

The *Archives Générales de Médecine* is published monthly at Paris, and each number contains 140 pages. Each will be translated, and republished at Washington, as soon as possible after it is received; but as there are occasionally articles of a local character, not particularly interesting to the American physician, it is proposed to omit these altogether, or to give an abridgement of them, so as to compress the work into 80 or 90 pages per month, with an Appendix of Domestic Intelligence, at \$5 a year.

We have given these details, because the undertaking is of novel character, and, we think, will well repay the encouragement of the profession.

TREATISE ON FUEL.

ANOTHER proposed work, to which we would ask the attention of all, is a treatise on peat, and the different species of coal and wood generally used for fuel. The subject is one in which all are personally interested, and few but are desirous of eliciting, from those who possess it, any information which may affect their comfort or economy. Among the multitude of popular lectures which have, for the last three or four winters, been given daily or weekly, in almost every city and village in New England, we have heard of none on the subject of *fuel*; yet how few subjects are capable of being illustrated with so much true practical usefulness, as this. The proposed Essay, by Dr. North, of New London, will be published as soon as his subscriptions will justify the undertaking, and the low price, 75 cents, will place it within the reach of a wide circle of readers.

The Publishers of this Journal will be happy to aid in bringing out this work, by receiving subscribers for it, and sending their names to Dr. North.—Dr. N. is the author of a work on Physiology, which we have heard of, but never seen.

THE MEASLES.

This disease has been particularly prevalent of late in this city and vicinity. There have been many severe cases, and some that have terminated fatally; but generally, the cases have been mild. We introduce the subject for the purpose of remarking, that an unusually large number of adults have been attacked; few of these indeed have escaped, who have been at all exposed to the infection, and some have passed well through the disease who had supposed themselves protected by having had it in early life. The first attack, in these instances, was probably sine catarrho.

The Bene Plant.—We have often seen this plant recommended for dysentery, diarrhoea and common cholera morbus. The Greenfield Gazette states that Dr. Stone of that town has raised it for several years, and employs it in his practice. He esteems it as one of the best remedies known in the healing art, for the diseases named. In the Southern States the blacks almost universally raise it, as they are often attacked with bowel complaints, and it was calculated that last year the lives of several hundred children in Baltimore and vicinity were saved by it. A leaf or two of it are stirred in a tumbler of water for a few minutes, till the water becomes thick, when the patient drinks it. It communicates no unpleasant taste to the water, and is not therefore so likely to be refused by the tender sufferer. The seed can be obtained at the New England Seed Store in this City.

Chronic Enlargement of the Tonsils, and Relaxation of the Uvula.—These parts frequently become enlarged from repeated attacks of inflammation, and the uvula elongated. Now before resorting to excision, the plan which I adopt in these cases with the most successful results, is the application of the nitrate of silver, in the form of solution. Take a probang, the sponge of which has been wetted with a saturated solution of the nitrate of silver, and keeping down the tongue with a spoon, or an ivory knife, touch the relaxed parts with this solution. Repeat the application every other or third morning, and after a few applications the worst cases usually mend.—*Dr. Elliotson.*

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending May 11, 35. Males, 20—Females, 15.
Measles, 12—inflammation in the bowels, 1—consumption, 8—old age, 1—scarlet fever, 4—bilious fever, 1—apoplexy, 2—lung fever, 2—throat distemper, 1—inflammation on the brain, 1—accidental, 1—intemperance, 1.

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NEW MEDICAL WORK.

CARTER & HENDEE have this day received, An Account of some of the most important Diseases peculiar to Women. By ROBERT GOOCH, M.D., Author of a Practical Compendium of Midwifery. In 1 vol. 8vo.

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